

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 EUR-12 NEA-11 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00
PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
SSO-00 INRE-00 NSCE-00 HA-05 MCT-01 ACDA-12 OMB-01
AID-05 EB-08 TRSE-00 /126 W
-----114837 161801Z /50

O 161710Z MAY 78

FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9728

INFO AMCONSUL LUBUMBASHI IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY ROME IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LISBON IMMEDIATE

SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BRAZZAVILLE

USINT HAVANA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY RABAT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY ACCRA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE

CINCPAC HONOLULU HAWAII IMMEDIATE

ICA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER IMMEDIATE

CINCLANT NORFOLK VA IMMEDIATE

CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN GER IMMEDIATE

DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L KINSHASA 4865

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS, PINS, CG, CASC

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SUBJECT: SHABA ATTACK: CONVERSATION WITH MOBUTU

REF: A) KINSHASA 4852 (NOTAL)

B) KINSHASA 4856 (NOTAL)

C) STATE 123866

D) KINSHASA 4777 (NOTAL)

1. I TALKED WITH MOBUTU BY TELEPHONE MID-DAY MAY 16. HE ACKNOWLEDGED BEING EXTREMELY TIRED AND NOT FEELING WELL AS RESULT OF PAST THREE DAYS' PREOCCUPATIONS. HE NEVERTHELESS EXPRESSED OPTIMISM AND CONFIDENCE RE REPORTS OF INITIAL SUCCESS OF FAZ COUNTERATTACK ON KOLWEZI. HE SAID PARADROP HAD GONE WELL AND "KATANGANS WERE DISPERSING IN ALL DIRECTIONS." IT WAS JUST MATTER OF TIME BEFORE AIRPORT BACK IN FAZ HANDS. I SAID THIS WAS ENCOURAGING NEWS, NOTING OUR CONTINUING CONCERN FOR SAFETY OF AMERICANS. MOBUTU SAID AS SOON AS AIRPORT SECURED, HOPEFULLY BY MAY 17, THEY COULD LEAVE KOLWEZI "AT THEIR LEISURE" (*).

2. MOBUTU SAID REBELS IN KOLWEZI WERE SPREADING GREAT DEAL OF HAVOC, LOOTING STORES AND HOMES AND PILLAGING FOOD SUPPLIES. HE SAID THESE WOULD BE URGENT NEED FOR FOOD ONCE CITY SECURED AND EXPRESSED HOPE ZAIRE'S FRIENDS, THE FRENCH AND AMERICANS, (INTERESTING OMISSION OF THE BELGIANS), WOULD HELP MEET FOOD NEEDS (REF B). I ASSURED MOBUTU WE WOULD GIVE MATTER URGENT CONSIDERATION WHEN MORE PRECISE NEEDS ARE KNOWN.

3. SINCE IT WAS EVIDENT MOBUTU WOULD BE TIED UP RUNNING THE WAR, AND NOT WANTING TO PRESS FOR MEETING, I TOOK OCCASION TO MENTION AMBASSADOR KASONGO'S MEETING WITH UNDER SECRETARY NEWSON AND TO TOUCH ON SOME OF POINTS CONTAINED REF C. I SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED PRESIDENT CARTER'S PERSONAL CONCERN ABOUT SHABA SITUATION AND FACT THAT WE WERE CONFIDENTIAL

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GIVING URGENT ATTENTION TO ZAIRE'S REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE WITH VIEW TO PROVIDING RESPONSE IN NEXT TWO OR THREE DAYS. MOBUTU SAID UMBA HAD REPORTED AN ENCOURAGING CONVERSATION WITH DAS WALKER ON THIS POINT. REFERRING TO MOBUTU'S COMPLAINTS ABOUT USG STATEMENTS ON SHABA (REF D), I NOTED DEPT'S MAY 15 PRESS BRIEFING WHICH HAD NOT INCLUDED DETAILS OF MILITARY SITUATION AND HAD REITERATED US CONCERN FOR ZAIRE'S TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY.

4. COMMENT: MOBUTU IS SPENDING VIRTUALLY FULL TIME ON THE SHABA CRISIS, AS WELL HE SHOULD. EXCEPT FOR HIS INITIAL INTERVIEW WITH AZAP BREAKING THE NEWS OF THE KOLWEZI ATTACK, HE HAS NOT SPOKEN OUT PUBLICLY AND A SPEECH SPECIALLY SCHEDULED FOR MAY 15 DID NOT COME OFF. PRESUMABLY HE IS AWAITING RESULTS OF TODAY'S ATTEMPT TO RETAKE KOLWEZI IN HOPE OF ANNOUNCING MAJOR VICTORY. WHILE INITIAL REPORTS ARE IN FACT ENCOURAGING, AS DEPARTMENT AWARE FROM OUR OTHER REPORTING WE ARE NOT AS SANGUINE AS MOBUTU AT LEAST APPEARS TO BE THAT FAZ CAN ACHIEVE QUICK SUCCESS INCLUDING SECURING THE SAFETY OF FOREIGN COMMUNITY. WITH EXCEPTION OF IRRITATION OVER INITIAL PRESS TREATMENT, MOBUTU'S ATTITUDE

TOWARD US HAS SO FAR BEEN QUITE REASONABLE. THE MEASURED NATURE
OF GOZ REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE TO DATE REFLECT UNDERSTANDING OF
US POSITION, ALTHOUGH MOBUTU HAS MADE VERY CLEAR HE HOPES WE
WILL GIVE MAXIMUM SUPPORT AND MUCH MOORE AMBITIOUS REQUESTS
ARE LIKELY IF CRISIS DEEPENS.

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Message Attributes

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